# Saint Paul Planning Commission City Hall Conference Center 15 Kellogg Boulevard West

# Minutes June 29, 2012

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, June 29, 2012, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners** 

Mmes. Merrigan, Noecker, Perrus, Porter, Reveal, Wang, Wencl; and

Present:

Messrs. Connolly, Edgerton, Gelgelu, Lindeke, Nelson, Oliver, Schertler, and

Spaulding.

**Commissioners** 

Mmes. Halverson, \*Shively, \*Thao, and Messrs. \*Ochs, \*Ward, \*Wickiser.

Absent:

\*Excused

Also Present:

Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Emily Erickson, Department of Public Works; Patricia James, Christina Morrison, Kate Reilly, Mary Matze, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

## I. Approval of minutes of June 1, 2012.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the minutes of June 1, 2012. Commissioner Noecker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Approval of minutes of June 15, 2012.

MOTION: Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the minutes of June 15, 2012. Commissioner Merrigan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#### II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Wencl had no announcements.

## III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that the July 13, 2012, Planning Commission meeting is cancelled, since there are no action items coming from any of the committees. Instead, the Commissioners are encouraged to attend the "Navigating the New Normal" session with the City Council. Senior staff from the Mayor's Office and PED will attend as well. The session will be on Tuesday, July 17<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.. The City Council last week approved the Grand and Finn Student Apartments, which was at the Planning Commission for Site Plan Review; the appeal filed by neighbors was denied. The Student Housing Overlay was approved by the City Council.

## IV. Zoning Committee

STAFF SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

Five items came before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, June 26, 2012:

- Hmong modular classroom, move modular classroom to school site at 1515 Brewster.
- Wells parking lot, new parking lot at 660 Wells.
- Wings Financial, expand existing parking lot at 1798 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street.
- American Testing, new 11,500 square foot building for labs, office and storage at 550 Cleveland Avenue North.
- Victoria Park Apartments, two new 3-story apartment buildings with 213 units at 734 Victoria Street South.

Three items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, July 3, 2012.

- Gerdau, site remediation: remove 13,000 cubic yards of metal-impacted sediment from North Star Lake at 1678 Red Rock Road.
- Montessori Training Center of Minnesota, new classroom buildings at 1611 Ames Avenue.
- Habitat for Humanity, new office building at 1954 University Avenue (at Prior).

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#12-064-233 First and First LLC – Modification of condition in previously-approved pawn shop permit that the pawn shop not face Suburban Avenue. 1891 Suburban Avenue, NW corner at Burns. (Kate Reilly, 651/266-6618)

Commissioner Nelson said that the committee voted to approve the modification with eight conditions. One of the conditions is that there not be any signage along Suburban Avenue. Another condition is that the applicant purchase and close the alternative financial business that is currently too close to the proposed pawn shop, so that the pawn shop comes into compliance with the zoning code regarding distance from other pawn shops and alternative financial establishments.

Commissioner Merrigan announced that she will be abstaining from this vote due to a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Perrus asked for clarification of the two-year timeframe for conditional use permits.

Commissioner Nelson explained that it is not a sunset for the conditional use. A person receives permission to establish the conditional use within a two-year period of time. A year has passed since the original approval, and the two-year time period is based on the original approval date. It is not reset based on this approval.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the modification of one of the conditions in a previously approved permit subject to additional conditions. The motion carried 13-0 with 1 abstention (Merrigan) on a voice vote.

#12-065-215 Providence Development LLC – Enlargement of the upper two units of a nonconforming 4-plex into unfinished attic space. 890 Goodrich Avenue between Victoria and Milton. (Mary Matze, 651/266-6708)

Commissioner Nelson announced that this case has been laid over to the August 2, 2012 Zoning Committee meeting.

Commissioner Nelson announced that the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, July 5, 2012 has been cancelled.

## V. Transportation Committee

<u>Comments on Central Corridor Transit Service Concept Plan</u> – Approve resolution recommending that the Mayor and City Council forward comments to Metro Transit. (Christina Morrison, 651-266-6546)

Christina Morrison, PED staff talked about the background and the recommended changes in Metro Transits Central Corridor Transit Service study. She outlined the study area, goals and process. Ms. Morrison walked through some of the proposed changes and the committee's comments for the Planning Commission's approval. She introduced Ms. Cyndi Harper from Metro Transit, who offered to answer questions.

Commissioner Reveal asked about fare impacts with service improvements, and about commuter parking. Ms. Morrison noted that the plan would reinvest the resources that are saved on the reduced service from route 16, 94, 144 and 50. This plan assumes no new service funding or fare increases.

Cyndi Harper, Manager of Route Planning for Metro Transit, said that there are no park and ride lots planned along the Green Line. She noted the urban context, and that LRT will primarily serve neighborhoods along the line.

Commissioner Oliver asked for clarification about which routes service park and ride areas. Ms. Harper outlined express service from Maplewood Mall and Sunray to downtown Saint Paul. She noted that there are no plans to brand services from park and rides to the Central Corridor area any differently. The marketing and promotion prior to 2014 will inform the public of the various new options.

Commissioner Noecker asked about improved frequency of service for the West Side on weekends, via the 62 bus. Ms. Harper stated that route 62 will now take the place of the 67, and that there will be no change to the frequency of service.

Commissioner Connolly asked for background on development of the plan. Ms. Harper outlined the goals and process. Emphasis was given to growing ridership, and strengthening the connections to the train and bus network.

Commissioner Edgerton commented on high traffic volumes into Como Park, stating that he would like to see the Lexington bus line continue to Horton to serve park demand. Ms. Harper stated that this was a common item of feedback that they have received, and that they plan to revisit this in the final recommendations later this year.

Commissioner Spaulding asked staff to outline the core recommendations, especially regarding the 83 bus. Ms. Morrison walked through the written comments and the draft resolution.

Commissioner Schertler asked why the 134 route is being reduced on the fringe of rush hour. Ms. Harper responded that route 134 will retain service but will be reduced on some less popular trips. She noted that improvements on route 87 will supplement 134 service. Commissioner Schertler asked about rush hour fares. Ms. Harper said route 134 is considered a limited stop, and is the same fare as route 87 and the train.

Commissioner Schertler asked if they had asked for feedback on route 134 changes, and Ms. Harper outlined the extensive public outreach process.

Commissioner Porter complimented the development of the service plan.

Commissioner Spaulding asked staff to discuss the Trusted Advocate Program. Ms. Harper explained that the Trusted Advocate Program is a demonstration project with the District Councils Collaborative of Minneapolis/Saint Paul (DCC). The trusted advocates engage community members who do not normally participate in a more traditional outreach process.

Chair Wencl stated that she was concerned about hide-and-ride parking and parking for East Side residents. Commissioner Spaulding reviewed City policy discouraging the addition of park-and-ride lots.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Spaulding moved the Transportation Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution recommending that the Mayor and City Council forward comments to Metro Transit. Commissioner Lindeke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

<u>Saint Paul Public Works Transportation Projects Process</u> – Approve resolution approving the process documents and recommending their use by the Department of Public Works. (*Emily Erickson*, 651/266-6059)

Emily Erickson, with the Department of Public Works, spoke about the Saint Paul Public Works Transportation Projects Process documents. The Planning Commission briefing is part of an effort by Public Works to clarify their process for selection and development of projects. Ms. Erickson explained how the Planning Commission fits into that process via the Transportation Committee. Part of the early work when the Committee was first formed was to develop and clarify project processes. Ms. Erickson went through the Transportation Reconstruction Project Process, some of which pre-dates the Committee's formation. Most projects begin with a funding application; the next step is a staff report that is reviewed by the Transportation Committee. After review and approval, the project is logged on to a project web site. A staff team, including Public Works, Planning & Economic Development and Parks and Recreation, meets to determine the appropriate review and approval process. Some routine projects may proceed with administrative review, and larger and/or more controversial projects may go through a detailed public process for review. The more controversial projects will go back to the Transportation Committee, and then the Planning Commission for official action. The City Council makes the final approval of the project spending.

If the Planning Commission endorses these documents, the Department of Public Works will incorporate them into their packet of best practices that they use as part of their American Public Works certification process. There are still some process details to be developed, including use of the City's web site. Therefore, staff is treating this document as a draft to be developed further. The Planning Commission will be consulted periodically to assess the progress of the Committee and staff work.

Commissioner Noecker asked whether, if the Transportation staff team determines that it doesn't need to go to the Transportation Committee, does it go back to the Planning Commission?

Ms. Erickson said that if a project doesn't need to go back to the Transportation Committee, it may be sent directly to the City Council for approval. For larger and more controversial projects, the Transportation Committee offers an opportunity to get a city-wide planning perspective.

Commissioner Noecker commented that maybe the steps that are conditional can be as such. For example, it says "after the Transportation staff meeting," but there is nothing that says <u>if</u> the team has decided it needs to go back to the Transportation Committee. It just looks like that happens regardless, so maybe there is a way to indicate such.

Commissioner Lindeke was curious about the trigger point idea. He asked what kind of changes would hit the trigger, what would be a case when that would come up.

Ms. Erickson said the one that comes to mind is the Jefferson Avenue Bikeway Project. Prior to this year, there was no trigger point because the old process dictated that if the Planning Commission had approved a project that later became more controversial, it would not be reconsidered by the Commission. In the case of the Jefferson Avenue Bikeway Project, it would have hit a trigger point in mid-process for two reasons. First, the scope of the project shifted and raised questions about conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Second, the Public Works Department may recognize the need for a second look by the Planning Commission where the scope has substantially changed.

Commissioner Schertler suggested that there should be language added that illustrates the timing, redevelopment impact or cost impact of an improvement.

Ms. Erickson said that might be challenging to capture in these documents, but that the Committee will consider including some of the needed analysis.

Donna Drummond, Planning Director, added that the staff report form for the Transportation Committee has a note on primary funding sources to provide that information and put that into context the comments that may be coming in about a project.

Commissioner Schertler made a comment using the Ford site as an example, saying that the site would require public roads for redevelopment – who pays? It would be helpful to have some sense from Public Works' perspective regarding appropriate allocation of responsibility consistent with City fiscal policy.

Ms. Erickson said that the Committee and staff have not had enough experience with this new process to give a definitive answer, but the Committee will continue to wrestle with these

important issues. She reminded the Commission that this is a working draft, and that there will be more Planning Commission vetting as we move forward.

MOTION: Commissioner Spaulding moved the Transportation Committee's recommendation to approve the resolution approving the process documents and recommending their use by the Department of Public Works. Commissioner Lindeke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Commissioner Spaulding announced that the next Transportation Committee meeting will be Monday, July 16, 2012.

# VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Reveal said that, at their last meeting they discussed the Urban Agricultural Study and reviewed the public comments. Staff will prepare a report and that will be coming to the Planning Commission in the future. The Committee agreed to meet at 3:30-5:00 p.m. instead of 4-5:30p.m.

Commissioner Merrigan announced the next Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting is on Tuesday, July 10, 2012.

# VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Oliver announced the items on the agenda for the next Neighborhood Committee meeting on Wednesday, July 18, 2012.

#### VIII. Communications Committee

No report.

## IX. Task Force Reports

Commissioner Schertler announced that the dates are set for the Ford Task Force meetings, which will be on Monday, August 13, 2012, Monday, October 29, 2012 and Monday, December 3, 2012 at the Ford Center. Demolition begins this summer. There has been some interest in preserving the Training Center. Ford doesn't object to retaining the structure as long as the cost to maintain it is borne by some entity other than Ford.

Donna Drummond explained that the cost of separating out the utilities for just that building was about \$500,000, which is significant. Also, there has not been a clear identified use for it in the future.

Commissioner Reveal asked if Ford sent out the RFP for the master planning yet.

Ms. Drummond replied no. Several activities are underway that must occur prior to issuance of the RFP. The Zoning Framework Study is underway; those recommendations will be reviewed by the task force at the October meeting and finalized in December. The Alternative Urban Areawide Review will start later this year; more environmental testing has to happen once the buildings come down.

Commissioner Reveal said that it strikes her as difficult to do a Zoning Feasibility Study in the absence of a master plan.

Ms. Drummond said what the Zoning Framework Study is evaluating is looking at the five development scenarios that were developed under the leadership of the Ford Task Force and making sure they have the correct zoning tools in the zoning code to implement any of those five scenarios. The purpose of the study is not to make recommendations on what the property should be rezoned.

Commissioner Reveal said that they are going to want to re-examine that when there actually is a master plan, and potential developer. It would be premature to do significant zoning changes until there is some idea of what the use is going to be.

Ms. Drummond agreed, and said that it will be an interesting process to determine in working with a master developer whether or not the City wants to be more proactive in establishing a vision for the area and putting zoning in place to implement that vision, or working with the master developer to see what is possible given the market.

## X. Old Business

None.

### XI. New Business

None.

## XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Drummond Planning Director Approved August 10, 2012

(Date)

Daniel Ward II

Secretary of the Planning Commission